

Attorney Docket No. 291958161US1
Client Ref No. P01-0046US2

REMARKS

The undersigned representative would like to thank Examiner Koch for holding a personal interview on 23 February 2005. This response shall constitute the Applicant's Interview Summary. Claims 54-104 are presently pending in this application. Claims 54, 103 and 104 have been amended in this paper to have at least a portion of the subject matter corresponding to the subject matter of claim 92 that was discussed with the Examiner during the 23 February 2005 personal interview. Claim 94 has been amended in this paper to clarify certain aspects of this claim. Claims 105-107 have been added in this paper. Although new claims 105-107 were not discussed with the Examiner, they depend from claim 92 which was noted as overcoming the rejection based on Ringer and Karl for the reasons discussed in the personal interview.

The status of the application set forth in the Office Action dated 23 November 2004 is as follows:

A. Claims 54-63, 66-75, 78-86, 89-97, 100-102 and 104 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 over (a) the combination of U.S. Patent No. 4,590,094 issued to Ringer ("Ringer") and U.S. Patent No. 4,651,440 issued to Karl ("Karl"), or (b) the combination of Ringer and U.S. Patent No. 5,156,174 issued to Thompson ("Thompson").

B. Claims 64, 65, 76, 77, 87-89, 98 and 99 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over (a) the combination of Ringer, Karl and U.S. Patent No. 4,078,935 issued to Nakagiri et al. ("Nakagiri"), or (b) the combination of Ringer, Thompson and Nakagiri.

A. Section 103 Rejections – Ringer and Thompson or Ringer and Karl

The rejections based on Ringer and Thompson should be withdrawn because Thompson is not prior art to the pending claims in this application. More specifically, the present application claims priority to U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 07/526,243 (now U.S. Patent 5,168,887) which is the parent case of Thompson. The priority claim of the present application can be found in the Preliminary Amendment filed along with the Response to Notice to File Missing Parts that was hand delivered to the United States Patent and Trademark Office on 3 October 2001. The pending independent claims are supported by the specification of U.S. Patent Application Serial Number 07/526,243.

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Therefore, Thompson is not prior art to the pending independent claims because both Thompson and the independent claims have the same priority date. The remainder of the remarks will accordingly address the rejection of the claims based on the combination of Ringer and Karl.

Claims 92 and 94 were discussed in the personal interview with Examiner Koch on 23 February 2005. One feature of claim 92 is that the wafer holder is adapted to overlay and peripherally support a single wafer such that the wafer is held face down. Examiner Koch agreed that there is no motivation to combine Ringer and Karl to come up with the elements of claim 92 because Ringer holds the wafer "face down" and Karl holds the wafer "face up." As a result, the rejection of claim 92 over the combination of Ringer and Karl should be withdrawn.

Claims 69 and 81 also include a wafer support or wafer holder adapted to overlay and peripherally support a single wafer. Thus, the rejection of claims 69 and 81 over the combination of Ringer and Karl should be withdrawn for the reasons explained above with respect to claim 92.

Claims 54, 103 and 104 have been amended to include the overlay feature of claim 92. Claim 54, for example, has been amended to recite a wafer holder adapted to overlay a single wafer and support the single wafer about a periphery of the wafer. Claims 103 and 104 have both been amended so that the wafer is held face down. Because of this amendment to claim 103, the applicants respectfully request that claim 103 be rejoined to the application. Therefore, the rejections of claims 54 and 104 over the combination of Ringer and Karl should be withdrawn, and claim 103 should be rejoined to the application.

B. Section 103 Rejection – Ringer, Karl and Nakagiri

Claims 64, 65, 76, 77, 87-89, 98 and 99 were rejected over the combination of Ringer, Karl and Nakagiri. Each of these claims depends from one of the independent claims that includes the overlay and peripheral support features of claim 92. Therefore, for the reasons discussed in the 23 February 2005 personal interview, the rejection of these claims over the combination of Ringer, Karl and Nakagiri should be withdrawn.


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In view of the foregoing, the pending claims comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112 and are patentable over the cited art. The applicant accordingly requests reconsideration of the application and a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call Paul T. Parker at (206) 359-3258.

Respectfully submitted,
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